

## Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9824

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 4844

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, EAID, MASS, CB, US

SUBJ: MARSHAL LON NOL'S CONCERN OVER U.S. ASSISTANCE PROSPECTS  
AND POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS OF OUTCOME IN U.S. CONGRESS

REF: PHNOM PENH 4831

1. GENERAL EK PROEUNG, MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR AND CLOSE AIDE OF THE MARSHAL, CALLED ON ME AT HIS REQUEST AFTERNOON OF MARCH 17. HE SAID THAT HE HAD COME AT THE REQUEST OF THE MARSHAL, WHO HAS BEEN FOLLOWING CLOSELY THE REPORTS ABOUT U.S. ASSISTANCE PROSPECTS BY MEANS OF THE AFP WIRE SERVICE AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL AGENCY NEWS SERVICES. HE SAID THAT THESE REPORTS WERE CAUSING A GOOD DEAL OF COMMENT IN TOWN AND LTHE MARSHAL WAS CONCERNED OVER THE SITUATION, ESPECIALLY OVER POSSIBLE POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS HERE. EK PROEUNG SAID THAT THE MARSHAL WOULD APPRECIATE HAVING FROM ME A REPORT ON THE CURRENT SITUATION IN WASHINGTON.

2. IN RESPONSE I MADE THE FOLLOWING FIVE POINTS AND ASKED EK PROEUNG TO PASS THEM ON THE MARSHAL VERBATIM:

(A) THERE HAS AS YET BEEN NO FINAL DECISION BY THE U.S. CONGRESS ON THE SUBJECT OF ADDITIONAL UNITED STATES AID TO CAMBODIA.

(B) JUST AS SOON AS I RECEIVE DEFINITE INFORMATION ON  
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THIS SUBJECT, ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, I WILL CALL ON THE

MARSHAL AND INFORM HIM OF THE SITUATION.

(C) THE U.S. MISSION REMAINS AT FULL STRENGTH AND THE HQMANITARIAN AGENCIES WE ARE SUPPORTING ARE DOING THEIR RELIEF JOBS AS USUAL. WE HAVE NO PRESENT PLANS TO REDUCE OUR PRESENCE HERE IN THE MANNER SOME OTHER FOREIGN MISSIONS HAVE.

(D) YESTERDAY THERE WAS THE LARGEST NUMBER EVER OF U.S. AIRLAND AND AIRDROP MISSIONS INTO CAMBODIA, TOTALLING 55. THE SURGE IN AIRLIFT OPERATIONS WAS PERMITTED BY FANK'S SUCCESSFUL RETAKING OF TUOL LEAP AND THE CONSEQUENT REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF ROCKETS HITTING THE AIRFIELD. THIS IS A SIGN OF OUR CONTINUING DETERMINATION TO SUPPORT THE GKR IN ITS EFFORT TO DEFEND ITSELF.

(E) AS FOR RUMORS AND COMMENTARY CIRCULATING IN TOWN, AS FAR AS WE ARE CONCERNED WE ARE NOT INVOLVING OURSELVES IN THE INTERNAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC, AND WE LEAVE IT TO THE KHMERS TO SORT OUT WHATEVER PROBLEMS IN THIS AREA THEY MAY HAVE.

3. COMMENT: THE MARSHAL'S CONCERN OVER THE OUTCOME IN THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS ON THE QUESTION OF SUPPLEMENTARY ASSISTANCE FOR CAMBODIA OBVIOUSLY RELATES TO HIS POTENTIAL EFFECT ON HIS WHOLE POLITICAL POSITION HERE AND HIS SURVIVABILITY AT THE HELM OF THE GKR. HE IS DOUBTLESS AWARE OF THE EFFORTS BY CERTAIN PARTIES TO GET HIM TO STEP DOWN NOW (REFTEL), AND PROBABLY BELIEVES THAT NEGATIVE ACTION BY THE U.S. CONGRESS WILL ENCOURAGE THESE ACTIVITIES. I TRUST THAT THE INFORMATION I GAVE HIM THROUGH EK PROEUNG WILL GIVE HIM A MORE ACCURATE BASIS FOR ASSESSING HIS COUNTRY'S AND HIS OWN SITUATION.  
DEAN

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